VISIT…

Cliffhangers Adventures

The Candlemaker's Fire

by Jesse Decker

"There's husbandry in heaven;
Their candles are all out." –Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

Jesse Decker wrote the short adventure *The Candlemaker's Fire* for four 4th-level characters. Player characters who complete the adventure should earn about half of the experience points they need to attain 5th level. Although no particular character class is necessary to complete the adventure, at least one character should have a good Will save. At least one of the characters should have a +1 weapon.
Since the main encounters involve a wizard and minor golems, the Dungeon Master can easily modify the adventure to suit higher-level characters by raising the wizard's level and substituting more powerful golems as his henchmen.
The village of Travensberg featured in this scenario made its first appearance in *Unearthing the Past,* Jesse's previous Cliffhangers adventure.

The Story Begins

After a brief adventuring career, Edarad Prinn, an enchanter whose fascination with magic extended to the creation of minor items, settled outside the village of Travensburg. Edarad was never a cruel man, but his ability to bend another's will with magic had left him haughty and without respect for any ideas but his own. The people of Travensburg had little contact with Edarad, except on his weekly visits to sell his candles. Most of Edarad's candles were merely high-quality scented candles, but he would also craft a few with minor spells on them for the wealthier members of the town.

Edarad funded his modest magical research through selling both his nicely scented candles and his more expensive enchanted ones. As his research became more successful, Edarad visited the town less and less and eventually began to deal only in enchanted wares, not wanting to take time away from his research to bother with mundane candlemaking.

Edarad last visited town three weeks before the adventure begins. The candles he brought to town on this visit however, were far from benign. Wanting to test the culmination of several years of research, Edarad sold the townsfolk a few *candles of cheerful burning*, merely to measure their effects on a large group of people. The *candles* hypnotized many people, but those who were not affected were able to shake the others out of their magically induced stupor. Satisfied with the *candles'* effectiveness, Edarad slipped off while the townsfolk were still working off the effects of the *candles*' spell.

Unable to find Edarad after breaking free of the candles' effect, a few of the townsfolk headed out to his cabin. On the way there, however, they were attacked by giant bees and forced to flee back to town.

The Chandler's Cottage

The chandler's hut is a small structure 30 feet long by 15 feet wide. The doorway is in the middle of one of the long walls, and the two windows are both covered with boards. The inside of the cottage is sparsely furnished; two large tables rest against the back wall,

and to the right of the doorway, a large hearth breaks up the otherwise uninteresting walls.

A 5-foot-tall hole in the back wall leads to a small cave in the ridge behind the cottage.

The Chandler's Workshop

The large cave behind the chandler's cottage is roughly a 40-foot x 40-foot square, with irregularities in the walls due to its natural formation. Candles, books, and workbenches clutter the area.

The Chandler's Storeroom

Beyond the small passageway, three interconnected hexagonal chambers disrupt the mostly natural stonework of the rest of the cave. Two of these chambers have roof holes -- Edarad's bees fly in and out of these holes. The bees think of these three rooms as their hive.

Inner Chambers

A secret door in the third hexagonal chamber leads to Edarad's inner sanctum. Beyond the door, a short hallway leads to a perfectly square 30-foot x 20-foot chamber containing with Edarad's bed, workbenches, and the raw materials required for his research..

Hooking the Characters

There are several ways the adventurers can become interested in locating Edarad and learning the motives behind his strange candles.

- Rumors of inexpensive and powerful magical candles could draw them to the area.
- A player character wizard could learn that Edarad has a specific spell she is trying to add to her spellbook.
- An NPC close to the party could live in Travensburg and ask the party to look into Edarad's strange behavior.
- The most direct way to involve the PCs with Edarad and his machinations is to simple place Edarad's lair along the group's path through the wilderness.

The Forest Path

The path to Edarad's hut is not well traveled, but any of the villagers can point the party in the right direction. The evergreen forest is relatively easy to travel through; the tall trees give the undergrowth little opportunity to flourish. The chandler's cottage is just over ten miles away through the forest. About eight miles into the journey, four of Edarad's giant bees attack the party. Groups trying to move cautiously through the forest might avoid the bees entirely, but the difficulty of moving stealthily over long distances and the bee's excellent Spot bonuses make this unlikely.

Giant Bees (4): hp 13 each; see *Monster Manual* page 206.

The Chandler's Cottage

Edarad's cottage rests against the base of a small rock outcropping and seems deserted. The sole window has been covered with rough planks, and the door hangs open. Characters looking at the back of the cottage notice that the rear of the cottage is connected to the rock surface behind it by a thick, brown waxy substance. Characters

looking closely at the cottage may make a DC 15 Spot check. Those who succeed notice a slight flickering on the walls of the cottage, as if a very small fire burned inside.

"…burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars and in the middle you see the blue center light pop and everybody goes 'Awww!'" –Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*

The Chandler's Cottage

The mephit is not alone; another of its kind lurks in the passageway that leads from the broken back of the cottage into the hill behind it. As long as at least one member of the party falls under the candle's hypnotic effect, the mephits attack the group. If everyone appears to have avoided the candle's harmful effects, the mephits flee to warn Edarad of intruders.

After the mephit has lit the candle, read or paraphrase the following text:

The wicked-looking creature clearly means you harm, but your attention is pulled away from it by the candle's cheerful flame. As you gaze into the flickering light, it seems to pull you inward, urging you to stare ever deeper into the flame. As you struggle to pull your gaze from the candle, the imp flies toward you and breathes a gout of fire from its mouth.

Although the mephit breathes fire during the first round of combat, it attempts to hit only those who seem to have resisted the candle's effects. Characters who win initiative can fool the mephit if they choose to continue staring at the candle. After the first round of combat, the mephit retreats into the chandler's workshop unless it definitely has the upper hand.

The second mephit is hiding in the chandler's workshop. If things go well during the candle's ignition and the first round of combat, it emerges on the second round to help its cohort. If the first mephit retreats quickly, it attempts to remain hidden and uses its *heat metal* ability on a character wearing metal armor.

Fire Mephits (2): hp 13 each; see *Monster Manual* page 132.

The Chandler's Workshop

Gray wax covers the walls of this rough cave, and numerous candles sit in simply shaped niches in the wall. Benches, likewise covered in gray wax, line the walls. Almost all of the 100+ candles scattered about the room's tables and shelves are normal candles, but a *detect magic* spell will reveal one magical candle. The magical candle is a half-burned *candle of cheerful burning*. Several tomes lay open on the tables, covering subjects related to Edarad's research such as beekeeping, candlemaking, and theories of enchantment magic.

The mephits don't know about the second candle, but they will try to use the room's layout to their advantage, flying to one corner and then the other to spread their breath weapon over as many party members as possible.

The mephits don't feel any particular allegiance to Edarad. They cooperate with him because of the potential mischief that they can cause using his *candles of cheerful burning*,

The Cliffhanger

In recent years, Edarad has become increasingly paranoid about someone stealing his magical research. The mephits have fed this paranoia. At the mephits' urging, Edarad built a trap designed to drench an intruder in boiling wax. The mephits have already armed this trap. If they flee from the chandler's workshop, they are careful to fly over the triggering mechanism when leaving.

Unless the party succeeds at a DC 20 Search check, they trigger the trap as they move from the chandler's workshop into the passage beyond.

"I would have you imagine, then, that there exists in the mind of a man a block of wax, which is of different sizes in different men; harder, moister, and having more or less of purity in one than another, and in some of an intermediate quality…" –Plato, *Dialogues, Theaetetus, 191*

The Chandler's Storeroom

This area is described in Episode Two. However, as the group leaves the chandler's workshop, they encounter a pit trap designed by the two mephits serving Edarad Prinn. The trap is a simple, 40-foot-deep pit covered by the same gray wax that coats the walls of the entire cave. It takes only 10 lbs. of pressure to break through the wax covering, so even the light characters will probably break through. The covering is opaque, but a careful search can detect the pit underneath it. Disabling the pit is simply a matter of breaking the wax covering. There is a narrow ledge along the east wall that allows access to the deeper chambers of the chandler's lair. Navigating the ledge is tricky, requiring a DC 10 Balance check to cross at full movement rate. Slowing to half movement rate avoids the Balance check entirely.

Pit Trap: CR 2; 40 ft. deep (4d6); Reflex save avoids (DC 20); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (N/A).

Bee Chamber

These hexagonal rooms house Edarad's giant bees. The few bees that Edarad has currently ambushed the party as they approached the cabin. Any that fled will be found here recovering from the battle. The rooms are hexagonal, reminiscent of the inside of a honeycomb. The hexagonal rooms are actually partitions of one large chamber. The interior walls have the same hardness and hit points as a thin wood wall. The interior walls, floor, and ceiling are all coated with the same gray wax found on the walls of the chandler's workshop.

Three holes, each nearly 3 feet in diameter, penetrate the roof of the chamber. The bees use these holes to enter and exit the chambers. Although the bees are probably not in evidence, Edarad keeps one of his most powerful creations here as well. When the player characters enter the northern hexagonal chamber, read or paraphrase the following description.

As you look into the third small room, you notice that the gray wax that covers the walls also covers a large humanoid form in the middle of the room.

When the player characters enter the room, read or paraphrase the following description.

The form is motionless at first, but as you move further into the room, it takes a slow, menacing step toward you

Wax Golem (1): CR 3; Medium-Size Construct (7 ft. tall); HD 3d10; hp 17; Init 0; Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 15 (touch 10, flat-footed 15); Atk +4 melee (1d8+2, slam); SQ construct,

immunities; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; Str: 15, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 1.

Construct: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, disease, and similar effects. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Immunities (Ex): Because their pliable bodies can absorb blows easily, wax golems take only half damage from bludgeoning weapons.

Resistances (Ex): Wax golems have electricity resistance 10.

See the wax golem's full description for more details.

The golem attacks with mindless intensity. Other than the golem, the room is empty.

The Cliffhanger

As the party finishes dealing with the golem, a secret door slides open in the southwestern wall of one of the hexagonal partitions. Beyond, Edarad and his final golem await.

"There are two ways of spreading light: to be
The candle or the mirror that reflects it." –Edith Warton, *Vesalius in Zante*

Edarad's Inner Chambers

The tools of his trade clutter Edarad's inner chambers. Large blocks of unworked beeswax rest against one wall. Books, candlemaking equipment, and more obscure materials required to make Edarads magical candles and golems lie strewn about on several large, wax-covered tables. The room itself embodies Edarad's state of mind, chaotic, confused, and full of a misguided creative impulse.

As the party enters the room, read or paraphrase the following text:

The large room is filled with a clutter of candlemaking equipment, sculpting tools, and furniture. Although the gray wax that coated the walls in other parts of the cave is gone, dried wax covers the floor. The furniture, including a bed, a bookcase, a few large tables, and armoire look well used, and all but the bed are covered with the wizard's equipment.

If the party manages to approach without Edarad hearing them (see Edarad's description below), they see him working at one of the large tables; a wax golem stands unmoving in one corner.

If the party attempts to speak with Edarad to discover his motives for exposing the town to one of his hypnotic candles, he proves uncooperative, trying to *charm* the PC doing the talking.

Wax Golem (1): CR 3; Medium-Size Construct (7 ft. tall); HD 3d10; hp 17; Init 0; Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 15 (touch 10, flat-footed 15); Atk +4 melee (1d8+2, slam); SQ construct, immunities; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; Str: 15, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 1.

Construct: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, disease, and similar effects. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Immunities (Ex): Because their pliable bodies can absorb blows easily, wax golems take only half damage from bludgeoning weapons.

Resistances (Ex): Wax golems have electricity resistance 10.

Edarad Prinn: Male human Wiz 5 (Enchanter specialist): CR 5; Medium-Size Humanoid (5 ft. 10 in. tall); HD 5d4; hp 23; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (touch 12, flat-footed 11) Atk +2 melee (1d4-1, dagger) or +5 ranged (1d4-1, dagger); AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Concentration +9, Craft (candlemaking) +10, Craft (sculpting) +10, Knowledge (Arcana) +7, Listen +5, Spellcraft +11, Spot +4. *Feats:* Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (Enchantment), Toughness.

Spells Prepared (4/5/4/3; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0—*arcane mark, daze*, detect magic, light, read magic*; 1st—*charm person*, mage armor, magic missile, shield, spider climb*; 2nd—*blur, hypnotic pattern, resist element, tasha's hideous laughter**; 3rd—*dispel magic, hold person, suggestion*.*

Spellbook: 0—arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, flare, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*charm person*, mage armor, magic missile, message, shield, sleep*, spider climb*; 2nd—*blur, glitterdust, hypnotic pattern, levitate, resist elements, tasha's hideous laughter**; 3rd—*dispel magic, hold person, suggestion*.*

*These spells belong to the school of Enchantment, which is the character's specialty. Prohibited schools: Divination and Necromancy.

Possessions: masterwork dagger, *candles of cheerful burning* (2), *bracers of armor +1, cloak of resistance +1, wand of magic missile* (25 charges), scroll with *dispel magic* and *sleep, potion of cat's grace, potion of cure moderate wounds*

If Edarad hears the combat in his storeroom (DC 10 Listen check), he'll prepare by casting *mage armor, blur,* and *shield.* If the party hasn't moved into his inner chambers by that time, he'll move into his storeroom with his second wax golem. He begins the fight by trying casting *hold person* on the character who looks like the most dangerous melee combatant. If things go badly, Edarad will attempt to use *spider climb* to escape through the holes in the roof in his storeroom.

The Cliffhanger

If the DM wishes to add another combat encounter, Edarad's giant bees could return through the roof in his storeroom. To encourage further adventure, include a note from a mysterious colleague among Edarad's possessions. The colleague could be the source of the formula for creating both *candles of cheerful burning* and wax golems. See the full descriptions of the candles and wax golem for more details.

Candles of Cheerful Burning

This magic item is designed to work with the *The Candlemaker's Fire* **D&D** Cliffhangers serialized module. However, Dungeon Masters can easily adapt it for their own scenarios as well.

Candles of Cheerful Burning

When lit, a *candle of cheerful burning* can ensnare viewers' minds. Those viewing a *candle of cheerful burning* must make a DC 13 Will save to avoid the candle's effects. Those who fail their saves find their attention captivated by the candle's light; creatures so affected suffer effects identical to a *hypnotic pattern* spell.

Those who encounter an already lit candle can still be affected by the candle's magic. A creature makes only one saving throw each time it is exposed to a candle's effect. Subsequent rounds do not require additional saving throws. If a candle is extinguished and then relit immediately, it does not cause additional saving throws to be made. Creatures must make new saving throws to avoid a candle's effect if the DM rules that enough time has passed between a previous sighting of the same candle (say, for the rest of the encounter). Each candle burns for a total of one hour.

A candle can affect a maximum of 2d4+3 Hit Dice of creatures at once. Creatures are affected in the order in which they see the candle. If several creatures see the candle at the same time, creatures of fewer Hit Dice are affected first. Extinguishing a candle immediately cancels its effect.

Caster Level: 5th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *hypnotic pattern*; *Market Price:* 12,000 gp; *Weight:* 1/2 lb.

The Wax Golem

This new golem is designed to work with the *The Candlemaker's Fire* **D&D** Cliffhangers serialized module. However, Dungeon Masters can easily adapt it for their own scenarios as well.

Wax Golem

Medium-Sized Construct

Hit Dice: 3d10 (17 hp)

Initiative: 0

Speed: 30 ft. (can't run)

AC: 15 (+5 natural)

Attacks: 2 slams +4 melee

Damage: Slam 1d8+2

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Abilities: None

Special Qualities: Construct, immunities, vulnerability to fire

Saves: Fort: +1, Ref +1, Will +1

Abilities: Str 15, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 1

Climate. Terrain: Any land and underground

Organization: Solitary or gang (2-4)

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: Large (4-7 HD), Huge (8-13 HD)

Wax golems are magically created automatons similar to the more powerful golems found in the *Monster Manual*. Their construction is similar to that of their greater cousins, but not as taxing or as expensive. Like other golems, wax golems are inactive unless ordered by their creators or unless attacked. Wax golems are incapable of strategy or tactics. Unless directed by their creators, they simply attack the closest hostile creature.

Combat

Although wax golems are deadly to the unprepared, they are nowhere near as powerful as other golems. They are emotionless and implacable, and they follow their creator's orders to the letter. Less powerful magic is used in their creation than with other types of golems, so they do not gain the benefit of magic immunity that other golems do. Similarly, wax golems do not posses most of the supernatural or extraordinary abilities that other golems have.

Construct: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, disease, and similar effects. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Immunities (Ex): Because their pliable bodies can absorb blows easily, wax golems take only half damage from bludgeoning weapons.

Resistances (Ex): Wax golems have electricity resistance 10.

Vulnerability: The wax golem takes double damage from fire unless a saving throw for half damage is allowed, in which case it takes half damage on a success and double damage on a failure.

Construction

It takes a tremendous amount of wax to create a wax golem. In order for the golem to be successfully completed, the wax must come from the same source. This means patient

harvesting of beeswax over several seasons, or a large supply of a mineral-based wax such as paraffin.

The golem costs 8,000 gp to create, which includes 250 gp for the construction of the body. Assembling the body requires a successful Craft (sculpting) check (DC 12).

The creator must be 5th level and able to cast arcane spells. Completing the ritual drains 160 XP from the creator and requires *resist elements*, *suggestion*, and *unseen servant*.